



## SCOPING NOTICE

# White Grass Ranch Rehabilitation and Adaptive Use Environmental Assessment

National Park Service - Grand Teton National Park

February 2004

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### SCOPING NOTICE

*The National Park Service (NPS) is preparing an Environmental Assessment (EA) for proposed rehabilitation and adaptive use of the White Grass Ranch as a western historic preservation training and technology center within Grand Teton National Park (GTNP) in Wyoming. Development and operation of the center would be accomplished through a partnership with the National Trust for Historic Preservation. The EA will address alternatives to the proposed development options to support rehabilitation and adaptive use of the White Grass Ranch for a historic preservation training center.*

*This notice seeks public comment on the scope of the analysis that will be conducted and input on issues and alternatives that should be considered, as well as any additional information, concerns or other comments about the proposal. The comment period is **February 18 – March 21, 2004**. Please use the attached form or send an e-mail to submit comments, and indicate if you wish to remain on the mailing list for this project.*

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### BACKGROUND

The National Park Service proposes to rehabilitate and adaptively use one of the historic properties in Grand Teton National Park for a western historic preservation training and technology center. The center would offer opportunities for GTNP and other NPS employees, volunteers, visiting students, and contractors and other federal agency personnel to learn how to preserve and rehabilitate historic structures in the Intermountain Region, beginning with those in Grand Teton and Yellowstone national parks.

The White Grass Ranch property is located three miles west of Moose, Wyoming at the foot of Buck Mountain at an elevation of 6,720 ft. (2,048 m.). The White Grass Ranch Historic District, listed in the National Register of Historic Places in April 1990, consists of eleven cabins, a main lodge, and a bath house. The buildings are seriously deteriorated and structurally unsafe. Roofs and walls are caving in due to neglect and the 4-6 feet of heavy snow that accumulates on the roofs each winter. Portions of the buildings, such as roofs and porches have been shored up in recent years to prevent collapse. The windows and doors have been boarded up to prevent entry of humans and large mammals and



plastic has been placed on roofs to prevent water damage. The historic district is considered historically significant under criterion A of the National Register for its association with the dude ranching industry. It is significant because, as a dude ranch, it helped define and set the standards for the Jackson Hole dude ranching industry, and the historic district exemplifies the local development of dude ranches from cattle ranches. It also represents the response of settlers to construct rustic log buildings in a natural environment.

White Grass is the third oldest dude ranch in the Jackson Hole valley. It was constructed as early as 1913, had a heyday from the 1930s to the 1950s and remained open until 1985. In 1956, all but a few



acres of the original 320-acre ranch were sold to the NPS for \$165,000 and a life estate. The remaining land and buildings became the Park Service's in 1985 when the owner, Frank Galey died, ending the run of the longest operating ranch in the valley. The NPS believes that adaptive use of the White Grass Ranch will provide the most effective way to preserve the historic district and that adaptive use as a preservation training center will leverage the NPS' ability to preserve historic structures in the park and the region.

## PURPOSE AND NEED

The **purpose** of this proposal is to rehabilitate and preserve the White Grass Ranch historic structures and portions of the cultural landscape and adaptively use the ranch as a center for historic preservation training and technology.

The **need** is to rehabilitate and preserve the White Grass Ranch Historic District and add and/or increase efficiency of preserving historic structures and cultural landscapes in Grand Teton National Park and the western United States.

## DESIRED FUTURE CONDITION

The primary objective is to rehabilitate the White Grass Ranch such that it will be conducive to the establishment of a western historic preservation training and technology center, in a manner that best protects the Park's cultural and natural resources. The NPS would further develop a partnership with the National Trust for Historic Preservation to establish the center in order to provide Grand Teton National Park employees with the time and space in a historic setting to study the technology of historic preservation. The knowledge and skills learned at the center will enable employees and students to preserve additional historic structures throughout the park, reflecting the values and significance of Grand Teton National Park and furthering the conservation of our nation's natural and cultural heritage.

## PRELIMINARY ALTERNATIVES

An internal scoping workshop was conducted to discuss management objectives for the proposed action and issues and concerns. Alternatives have not been fully developed yet, but some were outlined and evaluated to determine whether they met the project purpose, need, and desired future conditions. After discussion, the alternative of year-

round use, on a limited basis, was discussed but dismissed due to incompatibility with winter use and access, utility and park operation concerns.

A **No-Action** alternative will be included in the environmental assessment. This alternative would continue activities that currently occur at the ranch and would consist of actions to prevent the entry of humans and large mammals; prevent water damage; prevent collapse; and snow removal from roofs. The buildings would be stabilized or preserved, but not adaptively used. Access would not be improved and utilities would not be developed.

## PRELIMINARY RESOURCE CONSIDERATIONS

Resource considerations identified to date include:

- ♦ Cultural Resources
- ♦ Energy Resources
- ♦ Land Use
- ♦ Park Operations and Partnerships
- ♦ Vegetation
- ♦ Visitor Experience
- ♦ Water Resources
- ♦ Wilderness
- ♦ Wildlife and Wildlife Habitat

## NEPA PROCESS AND TIMELINE

The overall planning process is anticipated to extend over a period of approximately 7 months. Project milestones include:

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|----------------------------|----------|
| ❖ Project Initiation:      | Jan 2004 |
| ❖ Public Scoping:          | Feb 2004 |
| ❖ Analysis & Consultation: | Mar 2004 |
| ❖ EA Preparation:          | Apr 2004 |
| ❖ Public Review of EA:     | Jun 2004 |
| ❖ Final Decision Document: | Jul 2004 |

## PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

**We want your comments!** Anyone interested in this planning effort is encouraged to visit the park web page at <http://www.nps.gov/grte/plans/planning.htm> which will contain information on current project activities. Comments can be emailed to **GRTE\_Planning@nps.gov**, or you may return the attached comment form to:

National Park Service  
Grand Teton National Park  
P.O. Drawer 170  
Moose, Wyoming 83012  
Attn: Planning Office

**Scoping Comment Form**  
**Grand Teton National Park, Wyoming**  
**White Grass Ranch Rehabilitation and Adaptive Use Environmental Assessment**

Please respond to the following questions and **return this form by March 21, 2004**. You may attach additional pages if needed. Also, include your name, mailing address and email address (if applicable) in the space provided below. Thank you again for your interest in Grand Teton National Park.

Please be aware that names and addresses of respondents may be released if requested under the Freedom of Information Act. Our practice is to make comments, including names and home addresses of respondents, available for public review during regular business hours. Individual respondents may request that we withhold their home address from the record, which we will honor to the extent allowable by law. There also may be circumstances in which we would withhold from the record a respondent's identity, as allowable by law. If you wish us to withhold your name and/or address, you must state this prominently at the beginning of your written comments. We will make all submissions from organizations or businesses, and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations or businesses, available for public inspection in their entirety.

What issues would you like to see addressed?

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What alternatives or alternative management strategies would you like to see addressed?

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Do you have additional information, concerns, or other comments about the proposal?

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☐ Please check the box if you would like to remain on the mailing list to receive additional information concerning this proposal.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Street/Box #: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

**GRAND TETON NATIONAL PARK**  
**White Grass Ranch Rehabilitation and Adaptive Use EA**  
**P.O. Drawer 170**  
**Moose, Wyoming 83012**

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# **White Grass Ranch Rehabilitation & Adaptive Use Environmental Assessment (EA)**

**GRAND TETON NATIONAL PARK**  
**Teton County, Wyoming**

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